



WHAT IS THE CITY DOING ABOUT HOMELESSNESS?

The City of Mount Vernon uses outreach, enforcement, and partnerships to address the complex challenges of homelessness, mental illness, crime, and addiction on our streets. The actions taken by the City are unprecedented for a small city in the State of Washington.

EXTRA PATROL

Overtime shifts by Police to patrol Historic Downtown:

August - October 2018 = **460** hours
and **35%** reduction in calls for service

The City added a law enforcement park ranger to the police force in 2019 - focused on enforcement on trails and park spaces.



All Mount Vernon police officers receive **crisis intervention training** to more effectively interact with those struggling with mental illness.

The City hired 1 full time **embedded social worker** to the Police Department in 2017 in partnership with Skagit County Public Health Department. Through December 2019, she has had:

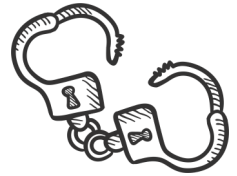


1958 contacts with or for individuals on the street, saving police officers **hours of valuable time**

- **63%** had mental health and/or chemical dependency issues
- **44** connected to treatment
- **68** assisted in obtaining ID
- **12** people assisted in returning to home county or state
- **8** placements in apartments or other stable living situations

DIVERSION & SHELTER

Programs like the City Work Crew Program and Therapeutic Court provide alternatives to traditional policing and prosecution models, with the goal of reducing recidivism (repeated crime) among participants.



January - December 2019

205 individuals participated in City Work Crew

\$51,120 Saved in labor costs



\$115,520 savings for 608 days NOT spent in custody and **3408** hours worked

On November 25, 2019 a **winter weather temporary homeless shelter** opened at the Mount Vernon Seventh-day Adventist Church for 120 days.



This was the 3rd year of a collective effort between Skagit County, Friendship House and church congregation volunteers to shelter up to 22 homeless individuals using the City's newly adopted encampment permit. The ordinance paved the way for local churches to provide shelter for 120 days each, on a rotating basis.

SUING THE DRUG COMPANIES THAT MANUFACTURE AND DISTRIBUTE OPIOIDS



On January 3, 2018 the Mount Vernon City Council **authorized litigation** against the big pharmaceutical companies who manufacture and distribute opioid medication. The City believes that these companies are responsible for the nationwide opioid crisis leading to significant harm to our City.

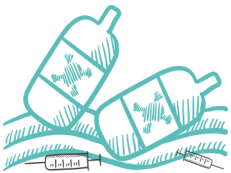
IMPACT TO PARKS: 2019



131 Encampment clean ups in 2019

290 hours spent to clean up encampments in City parks

\$11,151 disposal and labor costs

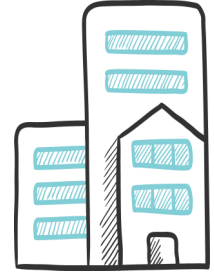


Hazards of encampments

City crews have documented fecal contamination in Kulshan Creek, and the Fire Department has responded to brush fires. Each site is treated as hazardous waste due to needles and human waste. An additional employee was hired in 2018 to assist in encampment cleanup.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

The City's Comprehensive Plan helped guide development goals, objectives, policies and ordinances allowing for the first permanent supportive housing projects in Mount Vernon.



That's why the City is committed to partnership with Skagit County and Catholic Housing in realizing a "Housing First" **70+ unit development for chronically homeless individuals.**

The City's overlay zone to allow for siting of the project is used as a model ordinance across the state.

GIVE RESPONSIBLY – TIME, TALENT, AND MONEY



The City encourages community members to give responsibly by donating goods, food, time or money to **Community Action of Skagit County** – 330 Pacific Place, Mount Vernon, WA 98273 • website: communityactionskagit.org • phone: 360.416.7585 and/or **Friendship House** - 922 S. Third Street, Mount Vernon, WA 98273 • website: skagitfriendshiphouse.org • phone: 360.336.6138 rather than giving directly to those on the streets, where discarded items can cause an unsightly mess and a health hazard.

COORDINATED RESPONSE

In response to community concerns of aggressive behavior, public health issues, criminal activity in the downtown area, and impact to the city parks system, the City's **Problem Elimination & Reduction Team (PERT)** has identified specific actions to be taken, as well as community partners and resources, to reduce the impact to quality of life and expense for our residents, businesses and visitors.



PERT is a core team with representatives from Code Enforcement, Police, Sanitation, Parks, Fire, Library, Development Services, and Legal facilitated by the Mayor.

Actions developed by PERT are listed in a comprehensive work plan which can be viewed on the City website at www.mountvernonwa.gov and include deliverables on several interrelated issues including:

- Nuisance RV parking enforcement and impound
- Encampments on public & private property
- Downtown law enforcement park ranger
- Shopping cart theft reduction



For questions or more information, please call the Mount Vernon Mayor's Office at **360-336-6211**

www.mountvernonwa.gov